

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Meeting

August 15, 2019

Atkinson 202

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met in Atkinson 202 at 2 p.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2019. In attendance were Mark Pelton, Dale Young, James Carlisle, Chris Ferland, Veronica Womack, Omar Odeh, and Cara Smith. Absent from the meeting were Sandy Gangstead, David Johnson, Susan Allen, Suzanne Pittman, Michael Watson, and Chavonda Mills.

Mark began the meeting by welcoming everyone back from the summer break. He noted that VP Shawn Brooks has volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee until his new Dean of Students can be hired and has a few months to become familiar with the campus. Once that administrator arrives and has become acclimated, Shawn will appoint that person to our committee. VP Monica Delisa has also asked to serve on the committee.

Dale and Mark met with Executive Cabinet whose members seemed pleased with the 2018 Strategic Planning Report. They provided a few key points of the meeting:

- Executive Cabinet was very pleased with not only the insightful report, but also the work the Steering Committee has done for the last several years. They are happy with our progress and the direction we are going in. We are doing work that not many universities do. Most develop plans which are shelved. Our plan is very much a living document that is being measured annually.
- One of our suggestions was for Executive Cabinet to identify those key measures that will move the university toward preeminence, and suggest more ambitious metrics for corresponding action items. During this discussion the President mentioned increasing the number of national scholars; the number of students going to Oxford; the Honors Initiative; the Andalusia Institute; and increasing our Admissions' applicant pool in order to lower the acceptance rate.
- We had a long discussion of our concern about retention and graduation targets on Page 6 of the report, with the President asking if we are stuck at approximately 84% first-year retention and a four-year graduation rate of 48%. The consensus was that the university can improve beyond that and probably will given the many initiatives which are underway, especially our transformative experiences, new career center initiatives, etc. This discussion became intertwined with the recommendation on programs with secondary admissions processes on Page 7. We've been asked to meet with Costas and Shawn to discuss developing action items that will move us forward. A three-pronged approach was suggested: Improving the 1st year experience; conducting a study of why students leave; looking into adding a new nursing cohort or a 4 + 1 program for Nursing where GC grads can become nurses in one additional year.
- When the leadership transition recommendation was discussed, Cabinet suggested adding the three associate provosts to the committee, and decided that the Associate

Provost of Academic Affairs and Director of The Graduate School (currently Sandy Gangstead) should co-chair with a faculty member (TBD). The Steering Committee may want to consider changing its operating guidelines to have faculty members serve on the Steering Committee for three years, instead of two, in order to make this arrangement effective. Cabinet decided that the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness should provide key support and assistance to the co-chairs including data management, helping analyze data and prepare the annual report, managing Watermark, and maintaining a dashboard of SP progress, etc. This transition timeline is to be discussed.

- Dr. Dorman asked Mark to modify the leadership change recommendation in our report to reflect these changes.
- Mark mentioned that we are just at the beginning stages of measuring plan progress, and though we only have three new action items and several changes to others, more changes should be coming soon. Goal 2 should see many new action items as we begin working with the new AP for Transformative Experiences. He mentioned that he could see revisions in action items coming so rapidly that the strategic plan would be constantly changing and there would be no need to have a massive overhaul of the plan every five years. President Dorman seemed very excited about this. Having a plan that is constantly morphing on an annual basis would be much preferable to the labor-intensive process the Steering Committee and university went through to develop the plan in 2016.

The meeting was then adjourned with plans to meet next at 2 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2019.